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A Souvenir by MADGE MORRIS

AT SAN DIEGO BAY

c Wagner, Madge (Morris) d. 1924

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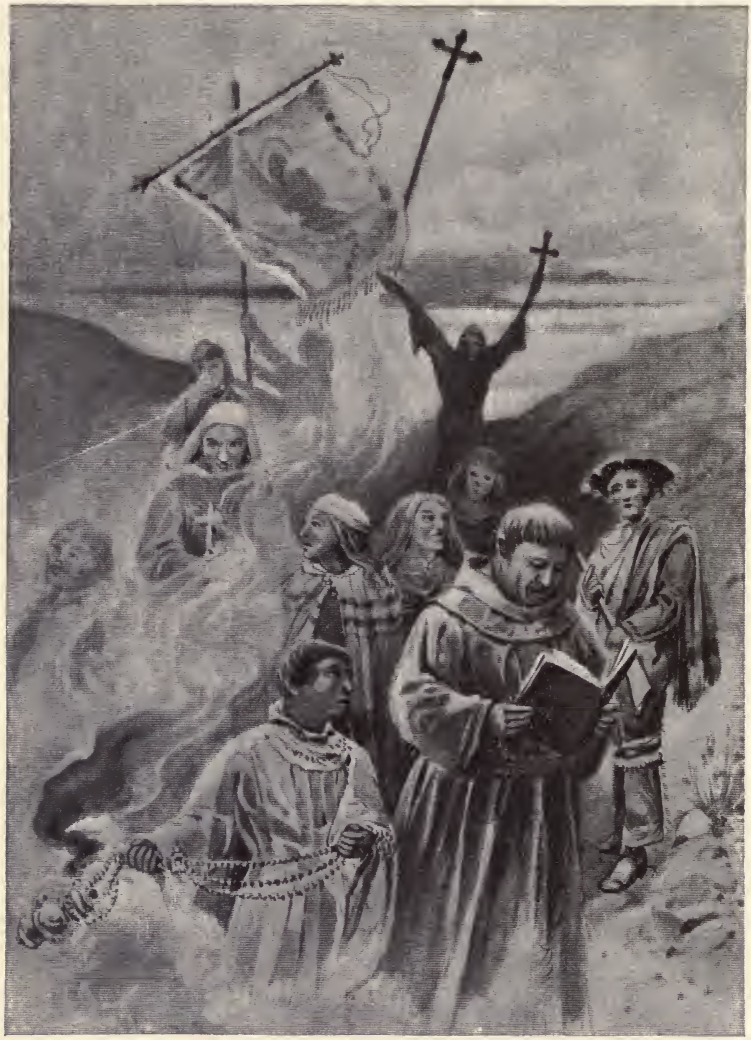

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At San Diego Bay.

MADGE MORRIS.

ERE first on California's soil,
Cabrillo walked the lonesome sands;
Here first the Christian standard rose
Upon the sea-washed Western lands,
And Junipero Serra first
Laid loving hands.

What saw they here that peerless band,
To bless, or touch with loving hand?
Or bid them pause, or dream to stay,
Around this silent sleeping bay?

An acreage of many miles,
Vast miles of sun-burnt naked space,
Red, brown, and bare, and baked as tiles;
Whose surface lay unchanged of face
As it had lain, the hills among,
Since first Creation's psalm was sung;
Whose people watched the squirrels play,
And knew not any more than they.

Not these alone, the fathers saw
Not these made hardships doubly sweet—
He never sees his arrow's flight
Who's always looking at his feet—

"Whose people watched the squirrels play,
and knew not any more than they."

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Those holy fathers, wiser they,
They marked the broad expanse of plains,
And mountains gushing crystal life
Enough to fill its thirsting veins;—
They saw, far off, the mingled weft
Of colors wrought from out the soil,
When nature rounds upon her loom
The laborers legacy of toil.
And served, and toiled, and built, and planned,
But ever saw a promised land;
And heard its slowly rising swells
Ring joyous from their mission bells.
And decades past, and fifty years,
A century was born and died;
A nation struggled into birth,

"The glory of the mission passed,
Its gloom, its glory, overcast"
J.F.M.
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And rose to mid-day of its pride.

And freedom's war-wet staff was set

Beside that one of love and peace;

And suns of noons, and midnight moons,

Unwove, and wove time's ageless fleece.

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And time crept by the mission bells,

And back, and tied their tongues with rust,

And touched the eye-lids of the priest,

And garmented his bones with dust.

The glory of the mission passed,

Its gloom, its glory over-cast.

Within its corners, shadow-walled,

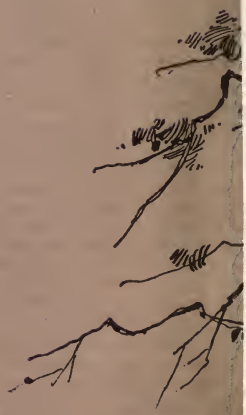
The bats built nests; the lizard crawled

Upon the sunny side to sit,

With soulless eyes, and laugh at it.

But smile not ye with scornful lips.
Nor croak a prophecy of this;
There's nothing lost, that's lost, and naught
That once has lived, has lived amiss.
Nay, smile not ye, nor count that false
Which failed in promises it gave,
For gold is gold, though it go down
A thousand fathoms in the wave;
And brighter hued the blossom is
That blooms upon a grave.
In silence sleeps the bay no more
Its treasury of wealth is found;
And all its crescent curving shore
With infant cities girded round;
And through its gateway come and go
The sails of sun, and sails of snow.

And progress to this old new West
Has turned her face and set her seal;
Has bound the waters, broke the hills,
And shod the desert sands with steel.
O land of sun!—hot, splendid sun,
Of sea-cool winds, and Southern moons!
Of days of calm, and nights of balm,
And langorous dreamy noons!
It needs no seer to tell for thee,
Thy quickly coming destiny.



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